

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SANTO 04748 202200Z

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 SSC-01 AID-20 NIC-01

PC-04 DRC-01 /159 W

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R 202050Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9284

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 4748

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT

SUBJECT: CRISIS WITHIN PRD DEEPENR

REF: SD 4718

1. A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO DOMINICANO (PRD) LEADERS APPEAR TO BE FOLLOWING JUAN BOSCH'S EXAMPLE DRAMATICALLY SET DURING THE LATE AFTERNOON OF NOV 18 AND ARE RESIGNING FROM THE PRD AND PUBLICLY ADHERING TO HIS NEW PARTIDO DE LA LIBERACION DOMINICANA (PLD). DURING THE PAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, SOME FORTY TOP NATIONAL LEADERS, INCLUDING MANY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CEN) AND OF THE SEVEN NATIONAL-LEVEL DEPARTMENT HEADS, HAVE PUBLICLY PROCLAIMED THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO BOSCH'S NEW PARTY. ALSO JOINING THE BOSCH BANDWAGON WERE VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE NATIONAL DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE LEADERSHIP OF THE UNIVERSITY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS' ORGANIZATIONS, PUSD AND FREN RESPECTIVELY. ALTHOUGH STILL WAVERING, IT APPEARS THAT THE PRD-ORIENTED LABOR UNIONS WILL ALSO SWING OVER TO BOSCH'S PLD. IT IS, HOWEVER, STILL TOO EARLY TO DETERMINE HOW THE BASE-LEVEL LEADERSHIP, WHERE PENA GOMEZ' INFLUENCE IS RELATIVELY STRONG, WILL SWING. AT THE RANK AND FILE LEVEL, MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE BOSCH'S INFLUENCE IS PREDOMINANT.

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SANTO 04748 202200Z

2. ONE OF THE FIRST ACTS OF THE RESIGNED PRD LEADER WAS TO CONSTITUTE A WORKING COMMITTEE COMPOSED ESSENTIALLY OF FORMER MEMBERS OF THE PARTY'S PERMANENT COMMISSION (HEADED UP, OF COURSE, BY BOSCH) TO LAY THE BASES OF THE NEW PARTY. ON NOV 19, THE PRD NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS IN SANTO DOMINGO WAS TAKEN OVER BY ENTHUSIASTIC BOSCH SUPPORTERS WHO REMOVED THE PRD BANNER AND REPLACED IT WITH ONE READING PARTIDO DE LA LIBERACION DOMINICANA. PRDERS SUCH AS PABLO RAFAEL CASIMIRO CASTRO AND ARIDIO GARCIA DE LEON WERE PHYSICALLY PREVENTED FROM ENTERING THE BUILDING BY A CORDON OF ORGANIZED FUSD MEMBERS.

3. DESPITE THESE IMPORTANT DEFECTIONS FROM THE PARTY, MANY PRDERS, STILL CONFUSED AND DISORIENTED BY THE SUDDENNESS AND UNEXPECTED NATURE OF BOSCH'S RESIGNATION, HAVE ADOPTED A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE. THIRTEEN MEMBERS OF THE CEN WHO ARE GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE IN THE ANTI-BOSCH CAMP HAVE CALLED AN EMERGENCY MEETING FOR 3:00 PM TODAY (NOV 20) TO DISCUSS THE CURRENT CRISIS. AMONG THE MORE PROMINENT OF THOSE WHO CALLED FOR THIS MEETING WERE PABLO RAFAEL CASIMIRO CASTRO, MAXIMO LOVATON PITTALUGA, SILVESTRE ANTONIO GUZMAN, SECUNDINO GIL MORALES, MANUEL FERNANDES MARMOL, AND LEONOR SANCHEZ BARET, ALL LINKED TO ONE DEGREE OF ANOTHER WITH EX-SECRETARY GENERAL JOSE FRANCISCO PENA GOMEZ. INTERESTINGLY, MOST OF THOSE ALLEGEDLY IN THE ANTI-BOSCH FACTION HAVE PUBLICLY CALLED FOR BOSCH TO WITHDRAW HIS RESIGNATION AND RETURN TO THE PRD. THIS SAME POSITION WAS ADVOCATED ON NOV 19 BY VICE PRESIDENT GOICO MORALES WHO, IN A WRITTEN STATEMENT TO THE PRESS, DEPLORED BOSCH'S RESIGNATION AND WARNED OF ITS NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE OPPOSITION UNITY MOVEMENT.

4. THE SANTIAGO PROVINCIAL PRD SECRETARY GENERAL, AMBIO DIAZ ESTRELLA, REPORTEDLY BITTERLY CRITICIZED BOSCH'S RESIGNATION, OPINING THAT BOSCH'S GESTURE WAS "CAREFULLY CALCULATED FOR SOME TIME" AND COULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS AN IRRATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL IMPROVISATION ON HIS PART. DIAZ JOINED WITH THE RESPECTED ANTONIO GUZMAN TO DENOUNCE EX-MEMBERS OF THE CEN'S PERMANENT COMMISSION FOR "DECEIVING" BOSCH.

5. COMMENT: THE COUNTRY HAS NOT YET SUCCEEDED IN RECOVERING FROM THE
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PAGE 03 SANTO 04748 202200Z

SHOCK OF BOSCH'S PRECIPITIOUS ACTION. MOST OBSERVERS REMAIN BEWILDERED BY THE EVENTS OF THE LAST 36 HOURS AND ARE WAITING FOR INDICATIONS FROM BOSCH AS TO THE DIRECTION HE INTENDS TO TAKE. THERE IS STILL CONSIDERABLE HOPE THAT BOSCH MAY IN FACT RETURN TO THE PRD WHICH HE HELPED TO FOUND IN HABANA IN 1939, ALTHOUGH TO THE EXTENT THAT HE PUSHES FORWARD ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PLD, HIS RETURN TO THE PRD WILL BE MADE ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT.

6. MEANWHILE, ASSUMING THAT TWO PARTIES WILL EVENTUALLY EMERGE AND THIS IS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN AT THIS JUNCTURE, DOMINICANS ARE BEGINNING TO SPECULATE WHICH DIRECTION EACH WILL TAKE. HERE AGAIN, OPINIONS ARE BADLY DIVIDED WITH SOME OBSERVERS SPECULATING THAT BOSCH WILL SWING FURTHER TO THE LEFT TO ATTRACT MILITANT REVOLUTIONARY ELEMENTS, WHILE OTHERS HOLD THE VIEW THAT THE PRD UNDER PENAS INFLUENCE WILL MOVE TO THE LEFT TO COUNTERBALANCE BOSCH WHO WILL INCLINE TO THE RIGHT TO ENHANCE HIS IMAGE AMONG INFLUENTIAL CONSERVATIVE SECTORS. AN IMMEDIATE QUESTION WHICH MUST BE FACED BY BOTH PRD AND PLD LEADERS IS WHO WILL REPRESENT THEM AT THE OPPOSITION'S ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES WHICH IS ESSENTIALLY A BOSCH CREATION. AT THE MOMENT, EX-PRDERS JULIO IBARRA RICS AND FRANKLIN ALMEYDA RANCIER HAVE PUBLICLY PROCLAIMED THEY WILL REMAIN AS DELEGATES DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEY NOW BELONG TO THE PLD.

7. IN ANY EVENT, BOSCH'S SO FAR INEXPLICABLE ACTION HAS PROVIDED DOMINICANS WITH A NEW SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION AND SPECULATION AND A NEWFOUND SENSE OF POLITICAL EXCITEMENT AND DRAMA WHICH WAS NOTABLY LACKING DURING WHAT HAS BEEN IN RECENT MONTHS A SINGULARLY UNINSPIRING PRE-ELECTION PERIOD. ALTHOUGH THE PRESENT SITUATION VIS-A-VIS THE PRD REMAINS HIGHLY FLUID AND THE OUTCOME NOT PREDICTABLE AT THIS TIME, THE NET EFFECT OF BOSCH'S ACTION TO DATE HAS BEEN TO STRENGTHEN BALAGUER'S HAND RELATIVE TO THAT OF THE OPPOSITION, MOREOVER, THE RELATIVE EASE WITH WHICH BOSCH IS ATTRACTING SO MANY FORMER PRDERS TO HIS NEW BANNER SERVES TO UNDERSCORE ONCE AGAIN THE FACT THAT DOMINICAN POLITICS REMAIN ESSENTIALLY CAUDILLISTA AND THAT POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS CLEARLY TAKE A BACK SEAT TO STRONG PERSONALITIES.

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PAGE 04 SANTO 04748 202200Z

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